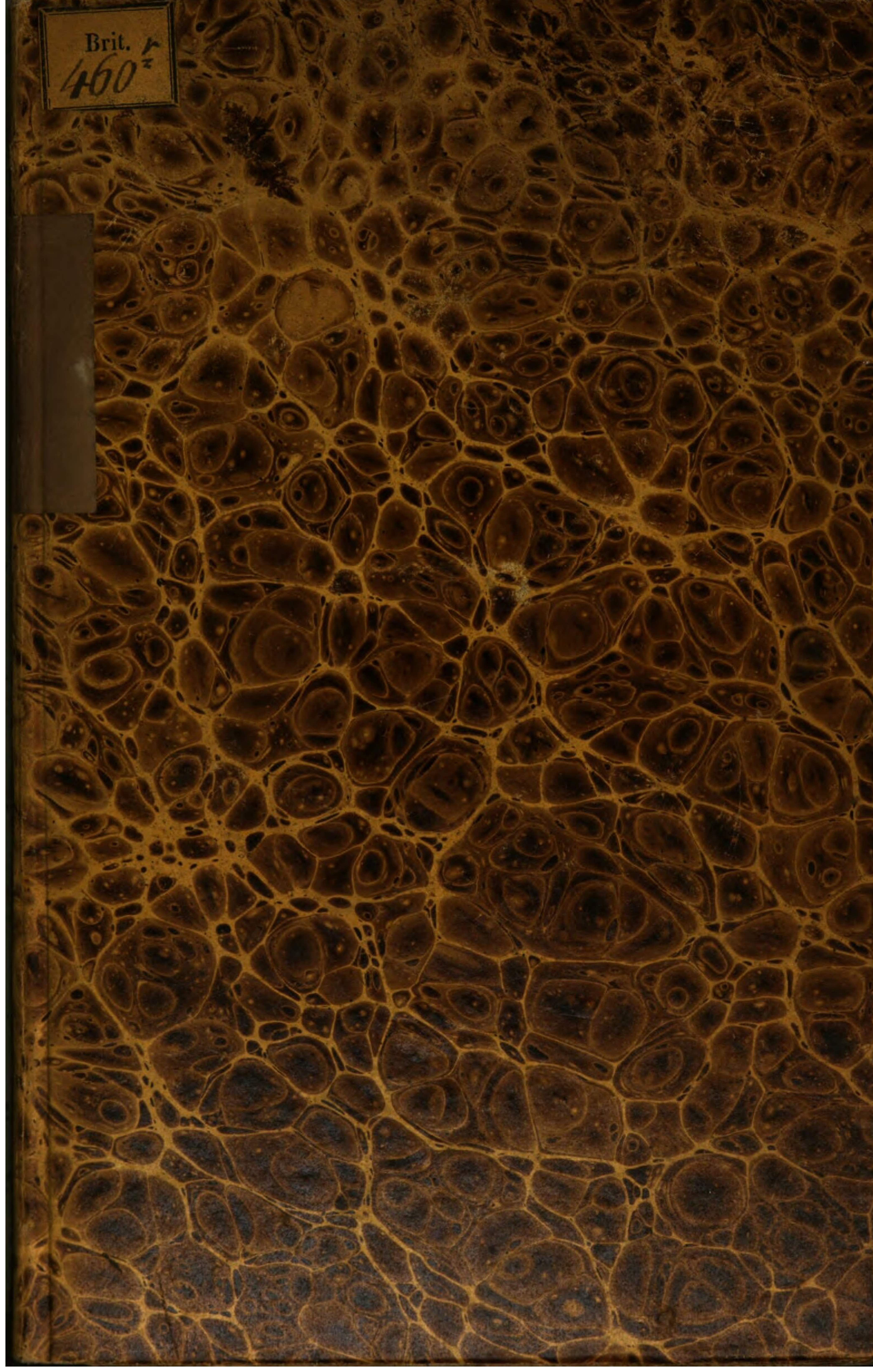


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THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED.

A FEW

CURSORY REMARKS,

UPON THE STATE

OF

PARTIES, &c. &c.



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THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED

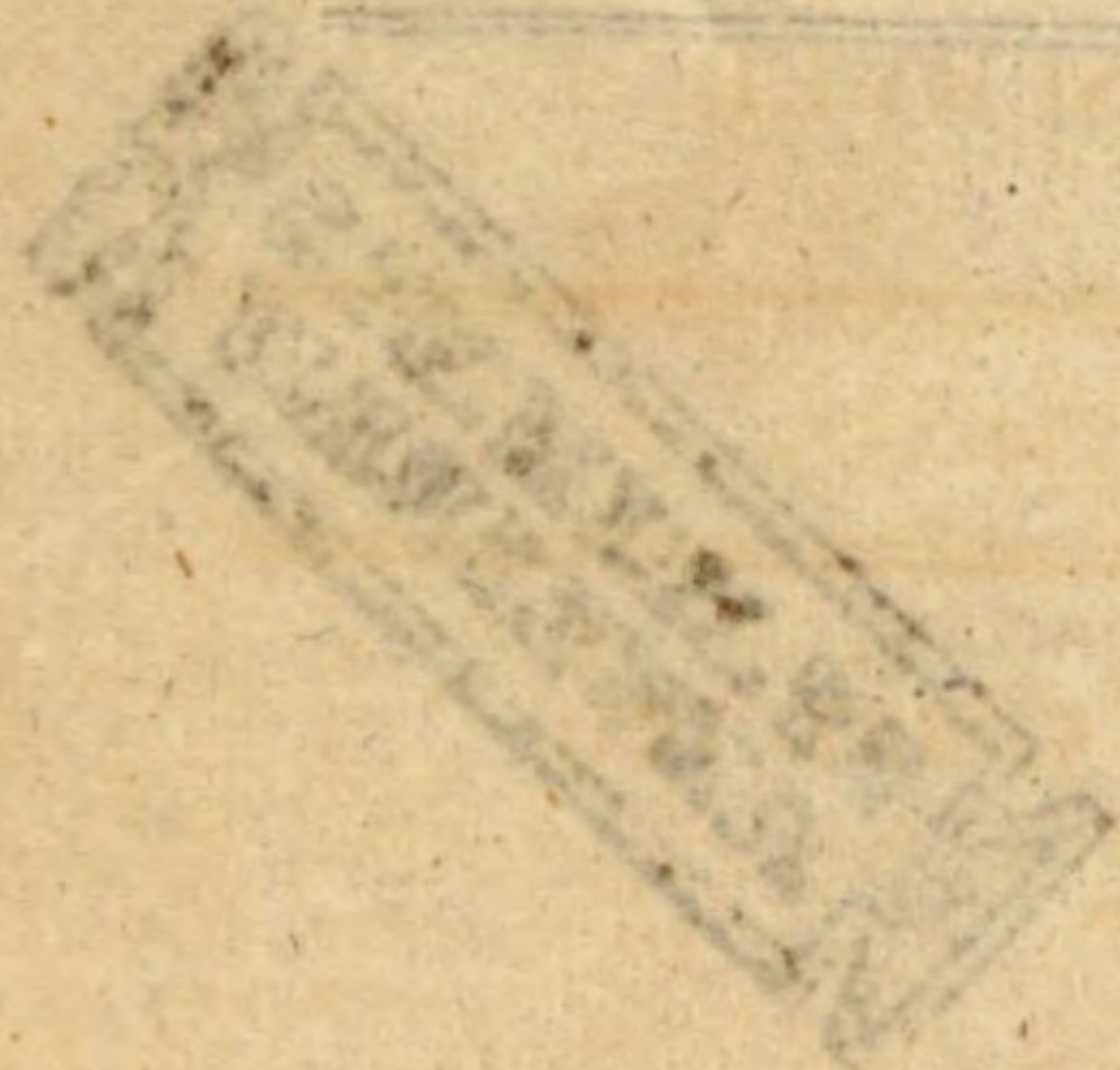
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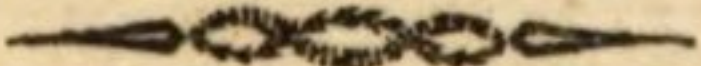
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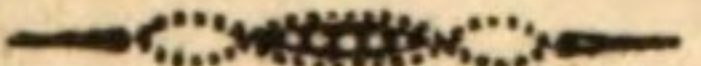


A FEW
CURSORY REMARKS
UPON
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PARTIES,
DURING
THE ADMINISTRATION
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY ADDINGTON.

——
BY A NEAR OBSERVER.

Prodesse quàm placere.

THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED.

——
LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD,
(BOOKSELLER TO HER MAJESTY,)
No. 190,
DIRECTLY OPPOSITE ALBANY HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

——
1803.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. BRETTELL,

J. Brettell, Printer,
Great Windmill Street, Haymarket.

No. 100,

DIRECTLY OPPOSITE ALBANY HOUSE, PICCADILLY.

1803.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY ADDINGTON,

FIRST LORD COMMISSIONER OF THE TREASURY,

&c. &c.

SIR,

IF your principal friends and well-wishers have represented your character with as much truth as ability, and the portrait they have exhibited be not a mere *design*, without resemblance to nature, you will not consider every man as your enemy, who will not, or cannot flatter you ; nor despise, nor resent any attempt to be of service because it is free from servility.

You

You must have observed, Mr. Addington, in the conduct of some of your predecessors, and you have doubtless remembered to your own advantage, how unprofitable and absurd it is to add insolence to power, and to think it a part of greatness to be hated. I understand that you are happier in your disposition, more manly in your friendships, more generous in your sentiments, and that to the frankness and probity of your public character, you join the virtues and the manners of elegant and domestic life.—May these good qualities of your nature, Sir, be neither corrupted by honours and success, nor soured by disappointment and ingratitude!

The following reflections are intended with much good-will to you and your administration; but I am far from promising that every page shall sooth your vanity, or promote your wishes, or coincide with your opinions. I cannot be your friend and your flatterer too.

I think,

I think, however, that these remarks will, perhaps, do some service; otherwise, in the present danger and inconvenience of our public circumstances, I should not think it warrantable to interfere.

I have the Honour to be,

Sir,

&c. &c.

A NEAR OBSERVER.

London, Sept. 5,
1803.

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London, Sept. 5,
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CURSORY REMARKS,

&c. &c.

THE surprise and consternation with which the public received intelligence of the resignation of his Majesty's late Ministers in February 1801, are not yet forgotten. The state of the country at that time, and in consequence of that event, forms one of the most extraordinary and memorable epochas of its history.

Fatigued, discouraged, and almost exhausted with the efforts, events, and burthens, of nine years of the revolutionary war, it was in vain that the nation endeavoured with straining eyes to gather a ray of hope in that vast horizon where the Sun of Peace seemed set for ever. The flashes of victory itself threw but a trembling and meteor light, too feeble to pierce the darkness that seemed to brood over Europe.

Deserted by every ally (but such as were our burthen and our weakness) we had seen the

subjugation of the best half of the Continent ratified at Lunéville. The strength, the spirit, and the character of the House of Austria were subdued and broken; and its mutilated power removed as it were by the fabulous spell of an enchanter, from the banks of the Scheldt and Rhine, to the distant shores of the Adriatic. The German Empire, a shapeless and inanimate mass, already mulcted and amerced of some of its fairest principalities, awaited the consummation of its fate at Ratisbon, in the silence of despair; while the King of Prussia, without a body of nobility, of prelates, or of magistrates, and *appearing* only to command his corrupted generals, and jacobin court, was glad to be bribed into a system which he had neither the courage nor the power to resist. So much wiser is it in the present constitution of the world, to seem treacherous, ambitious, profligate, any thing—than weak.

Russia, whose gallant armies had so lately combated, at our side, under the influence of her unhappy Czar, and of the more insane and deranged spirit of commercial avarice and fraud, now appeared against us at the head of a mighty confederation in the north; British blood had stained the channel, and the quarrel had been compromised without satisfaction or atonement by an evasive and disgraceful convention, signed at Copenhagen in presence of our fleet!

The

The rest of the Continent was France—Spain, Italy, Piedmont, Swisserland, the courses of the Lower Rhine into the ocean, the Seven United Provinces, the Low Countries were absorbed. By treaty or by terror, by influence or by force, they had become members and departments of the great nation; their ships, their soldiers, their commerce, and their revenues, were at her disposal; and a power so enormous as was never yet concentrated by any league or confederation of independent sovereigns and states, was now amassed and converged in a single arm; flushed with victory, goaded by disappointments, and directed by rancour and ambition against the shores of Great Britain. What part of the civilized world was there not in arms against us, or preparing to arm, when the late ministers gave in their resignation?

Was our domestic state more happy or serene, and our internal position more smooth and favourable for the retreat of ministers, weary, no doubt, of the fatigues of office, and cloyed with the duration of their power? I throw a veil over the malady of our beloved Sovereign, who never gave pain to his subjects but when they trembled for his life. But the future historian of this eventful era will make it his care to dwell upon a calamity which heightened every terror in our circumstance, and more than redoubled every other calamity. The artifices

fices of party, and the unhappy success of so many expensive expeditions, had entirely discouraged and indisposed the country towards offensive operations; and the unfortunate orders which had caused the violation of the Treaty of *Al-Erisch*, and (at the expence of the massacre of the Turkish army) detained the conquerors of Egypt in that important province, had created the highest distrust and dissatisfaction as to the conduct of the war, and the capacity of the persons entrusted with it. The war itself, too, of which the true nature and character, had been early mistaken *, and of which the principle and objects had so repeatedly appeared to change, had now grown unpopular and hopeless; witness the single disappointment received at *Ferrol*, which caused more discontent and despondency than, at earlier periods of the war, had arisen from all our mistakes and misfortunes in St. Domingo, Corsica, Quiberon, and North-Holland. An expedition, indeed, was prepared to retrieve our master-error in Egypt, and a fleet to assist our negotiations with the Northern Powers: but in describing the period I have undertaken, it were unjust to dissemble, that no minister could have been sanguine enough to expect their success. In the Baltic, a fleet had already appeared under the command of Admiral Dickson, to support a demand of sa-

* At Valenciennes and Dunkirk.

tisfaction

tisfaction for the injury we had received in our own seas, from a Danish frigate (the Freya). That gallant Admiral however had no orders which could save him the pain of witnessing, and Lord Whitworth no instructions which could spare him the necessity of signing a treaty of *Adjournment*, at the expence of some implied and virtual admissions *, which, in happier times, could never have been extorted from a British Cabinet. As to the recovery of Egypt, even now that it has pleased Providence to bless the valour of his Majesty's arms with such glorious success, it is impossible to deny the great inadequacy, shall I say? or the total incompetency of that expedition to its object; or to think that it deserved or could have been crowned with victory, according to human computation and probability †. These remarks are not voluntary, much less designed to mortify the vanity of any statesman, or to defeat the political *post-liminium*, by which the late Government now claims to enter upon the merit of that most happy and stupendous service; but it is impossible to describe with fidelity the period in question, without recording the truth of circumstances, and the just opinion and apprehensions of the time. I en-

* See the Convention of Copenhagen, 1800.

† Vide Memoirs of the Egyptian Expedition, by Sir Robert Wilson.

certain great respect for the noble Lord, who was the author of the expedition; but I hope he will allow me, without offence, to say, with good Captain Fluellen—"Upon my conscience, God Almighty did us some service."

In this complicated predicament of evil and despondency, with every part of Europe hostile to our interests, and preparing to annoy us; without a distinct end or remaining object in the war; our expeditions hopeless; our burthens pressing and severe; our enemy flushed with insolence and success, and galled by recent insult and repulse; our Sovereign indisposed and incapable of administering the affairs of his government; what hope or faint speculation of peace remained, what part of our affairs appeared retrievable? Do I overcharge or distort the picture? I appeal to the memory of all the country, who am myself a witness of its situation and its despair!

It was at such a moment, that his Majesty's late Ministers * thought proper to retire from his service; and that he was graciously pleased to call Mr. Addington to his councils. The melancholy event, and the period of doubt, difficulty, and danger which intervened before

* Messrs. PITT, WINDHAM, and DUNDAS; the Lords GRENVILLE, SPENCER, and (after what his Court, I believe, calls, technically, an INTERLOCUTORY or *two*) the Lord Chancellor ROSSLYN.

this and the other arrangements could be completed, are too painful, and too fresh in the memory for it to be necessary to relate. It was only upon his Majesty's most happy and providential recovery, that the nation could clearly know who were his servants.

It quickly appeared, however, that the best understanding prevailed between the seceders and their successors, who were indeed reproached with it as a weakness and a crime; but as the country dreaded nothing so much as falling under the conduct of Messrs. Fox, Grey, and the party of the Opposition, it derived consolation from the panegyric of the new Ministers pronounced by Mr. Pitt, in the House of Commons; and from the certainty of their being firmly supported by all the zeal, influence, and ability of their predecessors.

The public felt all the hazard and difficulty of their situation; and the courage and self-devotedness with which they had succeeded to the posts of danger, were the topics of admiration and applause. As yet no ambition had discovered itself bold enough to envy a situation, which certainly was not a bed of roses and honours which promised to wither before their bloom. The very character which was drawn of Mr. Addington and his colleagues, by the masterly hand of Mr. Pitt, was in no instance so worthy of remark and approbation, as in the strong virtual

tual confession it involved, of the difficulties and dangers of the situation in which he had left the government; and the silent reproaches he was indirectly admitting, in the case that he could be supposed to have been capable of retiring at such a moment, without a perfect confidence and satisfaction, that the King had been able to supply his place with a fit and sufficient government. Yet we shall soon find a very different picture, both of the Ministers and the state of the country, exhibited in the House of Commons, by the bosom friend of the right honourable gentleman.

If the private character of the new Government, and the great sacrifice of ease, security, and permanent dignity which the principal person had not hesitated to make, exempted them from suspicion of vanity or ambition, in the assumption of stations of so much responsibility; yet as Ministers their ability was untried. The resignations had taken the nation by surprise, and a general sentiment of doubt and despondency prevailed. So long accustomed to look up to Mr. Pitt, they thought that Troy could be defended by no other arm. It was true, indeed, that his popularity had materially suffered by abandoning the reins of government in so questionable a manner at so terrible a crisis; but posterity will judge what must have been the attachment and affection of the country

try for that Minister, what its opinion of his talents and his virtues (while they were entire,) since indignant as it was at his retreat, it still regarded his advice as the best hope of the state, and the new Ministers as firm and secure behind the ruins of his reputation !

Quanta—Roma fuit ipsa ruina docet.

It could not however happen that this friendship and support should be entirely advantageous without any alloy or diminution. The party of the Old Opposition had taken occasion to treat the government with affected pity and contempt, as the mere creatures or substitutes of their predecessors ; they pretended to consider the administration as in commission ; and, as far as can be collected from their conduct, they had in truth so little opinion of its stability, as to resolve upon giving it a temporary support and assistance, rather than press it too fast, and before they were ready to profit of it, to its inevitable dissolution. Under these auspices, did the King's servants return to Parliament from their elections. They had the confidence of their Sovereign,—the extreme good will and approbation of the public, but depressed by considerable anxiety and doubts of their sufficiency—the support of the resigners—and their own weakness to defend them.

Of their own motive, conduct, and principle, it is necessary to say a few, and but a very few words. They had not coveted their employments, they had not intrigued for them, they had not obtained them by parliamentary or popular arts. Their Sovereign, in a crisis of extreme exigency and danger, had claimed their services, and they knew their duty. But, in obeying the commands of their master, they had felt and were deeply penetrated with the impossibility of serving him and their country in the great necessity of the time, if that vast mass of talents, information, and influence, over which Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville presided, were not only suddenly withdrawn from the support of his majesty's government, but converted into an opposing, or even a neutral force. Whatever may be the difficulty and the delicacy, (for they are extreme) of the point I am treating, I think it indispensable to speak with courage and with perspicuity; and I challenge the illustrious persons I have just named to controvert the fact or the spirit of a statement, which it is important to the present, and to future ages, to place beyond controversy and dispute. I must take upon me, therefore, to aver, that his Majesty's most gracious offer of his confidence to Mr. Addington, could not have been, and WAS NOT definitively accepted, until a solemn authentic pledge of honour had
been

been given by the late Ministers, for their "CONSTANT, ACTIVE, and ZEALOUS SUPPORT." I do assert that Mr. Pitt and Lord GRENVILLE * did sacredly and solemnly enter into this *exact engagement*, and in *this precise form of words*.—You think with Hamlet, "the lady promises too much ! Oh ! but she'll keep her word !"

It must not be concealed, however, that even at this very moment of inauguration, the public might have discovered some germs and seeds of future difference and dissention. There was something in the very promise of support, and in the character of the parties, which, to a near observer, looked like an implied condition that this support should *never cease to be necessary*, and that ministers should never attempt to stand upon their own ground, and their own merits. Those at least, who could best decypher political characters, made use of this key ; by which, reducing the mysterious contract into vulgar letters, they read plainly that the Ministers would be supported by their predecessors, *just as long* as they could be considered as weak, incapable, and deciduous—as long as they could be *hourly* displaced they would be *hourly* upheld and assisted ; but if they should

* Lord Grenville has been reminded of this promise more than once by the Lords Pelham and Hobart—but his Lordship

leviter curare videtur

Quo promissa cadunt et somnia Pythagoræ.

attempt

attempt to walk without the leading string—if they should have the presumption to appear qualified for their offices, or to be successful in any of their measures—if they should dare to be firm, prudent, virtuous, or fortunate, or to lay any claim to any merit, or attempt by any means to procure the esteem or confidence of the country, then these acts should cancel the agreement, as contrary to its spirit and true meaning, and they should instantly be treated as rivals and enemies !

The House of Commons, I think, at this time, must be divided into four or five parties. The Ministers were as yet untried, and had taken their ground with singular modesty, appealing only to the future opinion of the public upon the measures they should pursue, and desiring to be judged of by their actions. The Old Opposition, though bent upon peace, or pacific demonstrations, was now evidently neither unanimous in principle, nor united in tactics. Messrs. Windham, Grenville, and their followers, were adverse to peace altogether—Mr. Pitt himself an host, supported Ministers openly, and perhaps officiously—Mr. Pitt's friends without the trouble of a public principle, or rule of conduct, were continually employed in decrying and discrediting the measures of Ministers, sneering at their persons, and foreboding their dismissal.

In this corner of the House, one continually
heard,

heard, in loud whispers, of their incapacity and *presumption* in having taken their situations, while, from another bench, they were openly branded as the mere puppets and substitutes of the persons to whom they had presumed to succeed.

It appeared as if the friends of the ex-ministry would have liked better to have left his Majesty altogether without a cabinet, and that for some reason or other, they would have preferred to see the kingdom ungoverned, and the King's sides naked in the anarchy. A painful obscurity hung over the motives of the resignations; the causes assigned were so far from obtaining credit with the public, and were so inadequate to the effect, that a noble Lord, connected with both administrations, and whose principal characteristic and device are political prudence, had not scrupled to treat of them as "mysterious," and the temerity of vulgar irresponsible judgments, proceeding upon the hint, had unequivocally ascribed them to despondency and apprehension.

When they heard the friends of a ministry, whose retreat they attributed to despair, accuse the persons of *presumption*, who had the courage to assume the guidance of affairs in their place, the public inferred that it must be presumption and audacity to entertain the least hope of saving the country, for they did not believe
that

that things had of late been so wisely, or so prosperously conducted, as to render it presumptuous in any set of ministers to hope they should be able to conduct the business of government with equal prudence, economy, or success.

Had this sentiment been confined to these kingdoms, perhaps, the ministers might have found no great difficulty in recovering the people from its effects. But unfortunately the same motives were attributed abroad to the conduct of their predecessors, whose retreat was considered, both by the government of France and the neutral powers of the Continent, as a virtual confession of the inability of the country to persist in the war, so that they had the misfortune to retire, and the new servants of the Crown to succeed under the imputation that the former possessed no ability of making peace, and the latter no means of continuing the war*. Under these fatal impressions of the public mind, both at home and abroad, was Lord Hawkesbury obliged to submit the first overtures for a treaty, which appeared to all men almost impossible to be obtained upon any terms short of ruin and disgrace; but to which we were at length happily conducted by the pacification of the neu-

* It was even believed that the late ministers had been long divided upon this point, an opinion which subsequent events appear to have justified.

tral powers in the Baltic, after the glorious battle off COPENHAGEN *, and by the *recovery* of the Treaty of *El-Erisch*, which was the consequence of a series of unhoped-for victories in Egypt †.

It is not my intention to discuss the merits of the preliminary or definitive treaties ‡, nor do I otherwise allude to these or any other public transactions than as I find them connected with the conduct or character of parties. It is fresh in the recollection of the public, that upon the peace a difference of sentiment immediately appeared amongst the late ministers, so serious and important as not only to authorize and confirm the opinion which I have said had prevailed of there having long existed a schism in their cabinet upon that question, but to make it appear for ever impossible for them to act together again in any political union whatsoever. No parties, no principles could be more distinct and discordant, than those of Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville, with their several partizans of the old ministry. The first gave his entire approbation and support to the treaty, the latter omitted no species or excess of blame and condemnation. Indeed, in the course of the contention, a fact

* April 2d.

† Alexandria capitulated September 2d.

‡ March 25, 1801, and Oct. 1, 1801.

came out of so extraordinary a nature, that although not strictly within the period to which I have confined this discourse, it appears to me too much connected with the object of it, and intrinsically of too much curiosity and interest, to be misplaced here, or any where.

I have already adverted to the disadvantage under which Ministers had been obliged to open the Treaty. The resignations were interpreted as signals of distress; and the unfortunate negotiations at LISLE, confined and circumscribed every project or overture they could hazard. Could Mr. Addington propose terms less favourable to Bonaparte, than Lord Grenville had offered to Barras and Reubell? Would France, now that one half of the Continent lay prostrate at her foot, by the Treaty of Luneville; mistress of Egypt; and stirring up a confederation of Kings from the bosom of the North, accept conditions less glorious or profitable, than we had offered her at the moment of one of her revolutions, * while the powers of Europe were unbroken, and ready to renew the war at our side? The projet of LISLE, therefore, was a circle, out of which the successors of Lord Grenville could not tread, and they could no otherwise hope to obtain even those terms in the present predicament of the

* September 4, 1797.

country;

country; than as they had been demonstrably inferior and inadequate to its condition, at the time they were offered.

Notwithstanding that so early as the treaty concluded with the Court of St. Petersburg*, the great talents of Lord Grenville had been employed upon a speech and a pamphlet, in which he endeavoured to oppose, discredit, and stigmatize, with every species of acrimony and contempt those Ministers, to whom he had so lately engaged his *constant, zealous, and active support*, the public now beheld with something more than astonishment, the same powers of eloquence, the same industry, and the same spirit exerted to induce Parliament to pronounce a censure upon a treaty of peace, drawn up upon his own model, and almost copied from his own hand! During these discussions, Mr. Windham who now took the lead in the opposition in the other House, made the important confession, that he had always disapproved of the project offered by his Lordship to the French Directory; and had always condemned those negotiations *in his mind*, to which, as a member of the Cabinet, he had outwardly lent his name, credit, and responsibility, and which he had constantly defended in Parliament. Neither did this confession appear officious but indispensable; for Mr. Windham felt the glaring

* June 5, 1801.

inconsistency of opposing the peace, and approving of the project. He knew that the basis of the Treaty of Amiens, was traced at LISLE; he knew that it had been made more favourable for this country, under circumstances more unfavourable; he knew that his colleagues had not hoped to obtain the whole of their *projet*; and that in every negotiation something must be abandoned, and something conceded from the conditions of the overture. He knew that if it were contended, that he and his colleagues would not have departed from their *projet* in a single tittle, it followed that it had not been a project, but an ultimatum; and that a courier had been more properly charged with it, than a Minister Plenipotentiary. Before, therefore, he would venture to condemn Lord Cornwallis's Treaty, with just regard to his own character, he took care to disclaim and disavow his part in Lord Malmsbury's Negotiation. Do I condemn the right honourable gentleman for this conduct? not certainly for leaving all the honour of the negotiations at Lisle to Lord Grenville; not certainly for protecting his own reputation, although in so doing, he shewed little regard for that of his noble colleague, in the late Cabinet and present Opposition, whose inconsistency, he was cruelly holding up to derision; but I confess, I am at a loss to conceive, what greater necessity existed now for his censuring
the

the peace of Amiens, of which the guilt and reproach (if there were any) did not attach and were not imputed to him, than he could discover in 1797, when his just portion of the opprobrium of the negotiations at Lisle, was openly fixed upon his head. I have heard this gentleman applauded by his friends to the very echo, for his consistency and manliness of conduct. Doubtless, by the side of Lord Grenville, Mr. Windham has some advantage; but positive qualities are neither dependent upon comparisons nor contrasts, nor is a man therefore a dwarf because he happens to stand by a giant. As Mr. Windham is now at the head of a party, and of a great political principle, it may be fitting to enquire a little into the truth and warrant of a title so high and so rare!

Is it consistent (with what is it consistent) to oppose a measure in the Council, and approve it in the House of Commons? To appear for peace and condemn it; to defend negotiations and lament them; to think war only can save the country, and be part of a ministry eternally straining after treaties? Is it consistent to have been silent at Lisle, and vociferous at Amiens—to be neutral in power, and violent out of it—to conceal opinions as a Minister, and promulge them as the head of a party?—Are these, I ask, the qualities and distinctive marks of a man of place—a man of time—a man of circumstances—

ces—a man of convenience—or the masculine, firm, consistent, unalterable character of Mr. Windham?

In pursuing the subject of these remarks, we shall have the misfortune to see the right honourable gentleman in full fruition of his vow, and the kingdom replunged into a war, which no policy, no human prudence, no moderation, no forbearance, could avert. Shall we find him *consistent* then? Shall we hear his voice cheering the country, inspiring confidence in the government, heroic ardour and self-devotedness in the people? Shall we behold him arraying the forces, balloting the militia, calling out the volunteers? Will he impose silence upon the factions by his eloquence, banishing delays, and conquering obstacles by the vigour of his mind? Giving the lesson and example of public virtue, and acting the glorious part of a patriot-statesman, the disciple of Burke?

The Ministers were confident of having deserved well; they had obtained a peace for the country, beyond the hopes of the wisest and the most sanguine of their well-wishers, and they had arrived at it by the gate of victory and success. During the short period of their power, the battles of *Algeziras* and *Copenhagen* had crowned the rostral column, and completed the glorious blazon of our naval enterprize and success. But the recovery of the
treaty

treaty of *El-Arisch*, in consequence of the decided superiority of his Majesty's troops and commanders over the pretended invincible generals and armies of France, gave a character to the peace, more desirable, more incalculably valuable, than Malta, Trinidad, and Ceylon, or all the territorial acquisitions which could have been obtained by the utmost happiness of diplomatic ingenuity*.

It has been already observed, that Mr. Fox, and the whole of the Old Opposition party, as it is henceforward to be called, thought it their policy to approve unequivocally of the peace. How could they do otherwise? They had uniformly invoked and demanded peace at every expence and at every sacrifice; and they had determined besides to give a little encouragement to the *substitute* administration, in the hope that it might open the way to a better understanding in certain cases, and at any rate for the satisfaction of mortifying the resigners, and rendering their promised, but always equi-

* I should, (with more leisure) have little hesitation in maintaining the paradox, that at Amiens it would have been possible to render back more to the First Consul and his allies, after our victories in Egypt than before them; because, from henceforward, our established superiority in the field, as well as upon the ocean, enabled us to risk more without palpable imprudence, to confide more in ourselves, and less in distant fortresses and external defence; and, finally, to try the "Grand Experiment of Peace," with better auspices, and more certain resources in ourselves.

vocal

vocal assistance, less important and meritorious. I do not know that it is necessary to the present subject, for me to occupy much more of the time and reflexion of the public upon the state and politics of parties, at this period. It is possible some individuals* had deeper designs and clearer objects in view. But as brevity is a great part of my design, I think this short recapitulation will be sufficient.

Mr. Pitt unequivocally approved the peace—Mr. Windham, the Grenvilles, and their adherents, as decidedly affected to lament and condemn it—while the personal friends of Mr. Pitt, and the members most attached and devoted to him by the habits of private life, took the liberty of disclaiming him for their leader, and indulged in every species of rancour, malice, and hostility, against the person who had had the *presumption* to fill his vacant place in the Cabinet. Of this party Mr. Canning, if not the founder, had the reputation of being the leader; and as I have now arrived at the dissolution of the last parlia-

* Mr. Tierney has succeeded. Reports have not been wanting, nor do I believe that Mr. Grey and Lord Moira would have proved inexorable *if any overtures had been made*; but the fact is otherwise. It is to be observed that Mr. Grey, had taken many occasions of distinguishing his parliamentary opposition from that of Mr. Fox. With regard to Government, as connected with parties, the friendship of Mr. Pitt, and his return to the Cabinet, were its favourite, and (I imagine) its exclusive reliance and desire.

ment,

ment*, I take the opportunity of submitting a few reflexions upon the influence they had upon public opinion, the doubts, anxiety, and speculation which they nourished and kept alive, and the disagreeable insinuations and suspicions, they originated against the purity of the high character, whose wishes and interests they were supposed best to understand, and to whose person they were exclusively devoted.

It appeared from the eager resentments of these zealous partizans, in the first place, that they disapproved of the conduct of their patron in having resigned the seals of his office;—and that with his place he had lost that influence and authority over their minds, which had hitherto commanded their approbation or acquiescence; that they chose now to think and speak for themselves, to condemn his arrangements, to ridicule his friendships, and to attack the measures, and the men he supported. Then again, as it is the nature of uncertainty, it seemed as if this support could not be perfectly sincere, or very durable, in

* The differences of opinion upon the peace-establishment arose so implicitly out of those upon the peace, that they neither altered or discovered any thing, that I am aware of, in the state of parties. Mr. Fox and Mr. Bankes would have been contented with the usual degree of force and preparedness. Mr. Windham and the Grenvilles sounded alarm and armament. The Ministers, as usual, took the middle course.

which

which the persons most solicitous of his favour could not be induced to concur: and it was thought incredible that Mr. Canning, in particular, distinguished by his friendship and partiality, should rebel against his benefactor; and, at the moment of his retreat, fall suddenly into mutiny and revolt! The public could not, therefore, be brought implicitly to believe either that the acceptance of the new Ministers itself, or at any rate the credit and popularity which they had acquired by the late happy events, were altogether agreeable to Mr. Pitt.

It was observed, that at the very outset, his confidential friends, his Pylades and faithful Achates, had felt disappointment in the very circumstance of the King's having been able to find another Minister at all! But that this Minister should dare to appear worthy of his Majesty's confidence, and to carry on his affairs with ability or success, appeared an unpardonable injury and a crime!

If I were as certain of not giving offence, as I am free from intending it, and of being as little suspected of a flattery, as I am incapable of meaning one, I would venture to ask of Mr. Canning himself, for whose agreeable talents and private worth I have as much respect as any man, whether it were possible for these inferences and conclusions to have escaped his own good sense and sagacity?

Whether

Whether he did not feel that he was throwing a suspicion over the candour and sincerity of Mr. Pitt *? and in case that any possible measures of the present Ministers, at any future time, might *compel the conscience* of Mr. Pitt to withdraw his promised support from them, and to take an active part in opposition to them, whether he did not perceive that he was undermining and destroying beforehand the conviction and credit of the country, in the compulsion of his right honourable friend's conscience? Whether he did not perceive that he was exposing that late, contingent, constrained, and possible opposition to the suspicion of system, preconcert and policy?

I would ask of Mr. CANNING whether it were not too great a submission of his rare talents and acquirements, to appear a mere partizan and stickler for the House of Grenville? Whether he can look back with satisfaction hereafter, from the proud eminence to which one day no doubt he aspires in the councils of his country, to the debate of Nov. 23, 1802, when, blinded by recent hatred and party zeal, he asserted that the "*State in which the late ministers left the country, was the reverse of calamitous?*" "*That there never was a situation*

* Mr. Pitt has since been exculpated upon this point by Mr. Canning with great eloquence, but imperfect success. Vide Parl. Reg. Dec. 8, 1802.

which afforded more temptation to the wishes or ambition of those who were proposed to succeed them ;” that nothing could be more desirable than the succession obtained by the present Minister,” &c. &c. Surely there may come a time*

Magno cum optaverit emptum,

that all these things had been unsaid, which were contradicted by the conscience of every hearer, and will be eternally disproved by the history of the country.

I would ask of Mr. Canning, (for whom I repeat that I entertain a considerable degree of respect and good-will), whether in the difference and distinction with which he has always affected to treat his noble friend, Lord Hawkesbury, he was pleasing the old ministry? and whether his personalities towards Mr. Addington did not lead him in these civilities to mortify Lord Grenville? But if his regard for Lord Hawkesbury could conquer the fear of offending Lord Grenville, why might not his regard for Mr. Pitt have overcome his antipathy to Mr. Addington†? I would ask whether he could feel no repugnance at becoming the instrument, (I will not say the machine) of other persons? If the delicacy of his feelings were quite satisfied as to the justice, the honor, or the decency,

* Vide Parliamentary Register, Nov. 23.

† Vide Debates, December 2d.

of being the organ of *their* hatred, *their* fury, *their* pride, disappointment, and rancour, against gentlemen with whom he had long lived in habits of political and private intimacy, for whom he had professed friendship and esteem; against Mr. Addington, the bosom friend of his patron, and against Lord Chatham, his brother?

I would ask of Mr. Canning, whether he felt no scruple or compunction for himself, and if he had not discarded all respect and mercy for the feelings of Mr. Pitt, when he consented to become the chief of the satyrists and scoffers of a cabinet, of which Lord Chatham was the president? and I would ask him whether he had been juster to himself, and to his own just pretensions and character, than we have seen him to the sensibility of his friend and patron, when he condescended to become a hero of squibs and epigrams, a leader of doggrel and lampoon, a power in the war of abuse and invective, an instrument of Mr. Windham, and an auxiliary of Cobbett?

A great part of the summer of 1802, was taken up with the general election, in which the ministers had formed the singular resolution of using no influence, or interference whatsoever. In the mean time, the First Consul of France was pursuing a course that must have been exceedingly gratifying to Mr. Windham, and the
band

band of gentleman, whom the *Moniteur* had politely christened the “war-faction.” But upon these topics, I permit myself to say no more than I conceive to be necessary to keep up the thread of the particular subjects under discussion. When Parliament re-assembled*, the aspect of foreign affairs, was far from promising tranquillity. The government in the Thuilleries had proceeded with violence, and without an attempt at dissimulation in that train of encroachment, from which, even during the negotiation at Amiens, it had not been able to desist. I need scarcely mention the names of Piedmont, Parma, and Swisserland. The French troops had not been withdrawn according to treaty from the territories of the Batavian Republic, and some of the cessions on our part in the Treaty of Amiens remained unexecuted.

It had also become necessary for ministers to place in the King’s mouth, an assurance that his Majesty would continue to keep a vigilant eye upon the affairs of the Continent†.—There was

* November 8, 1802.

† “In my intercourse with foreign powers, I have been actuated by a sincere desire for the maintenance of peace. It is nevertheless impossible for me to lose sight of that established and wise system of policy, by which the interests of other states are connected with our own; and I cannot therefore be indifferent to any material change in their relative condition and

was, I believe, but one opinion upon this point, that it was a dignified and becoming proceeding; at least it did not appear expedient to any of the parties I have described to find fault with it. It was considered as a solemn but a temperate protest against the offensive and insulting assumption of the Official Paper of the chief magistrate of France, who was evidently attempting to discredit and dishonour us in the courts of Europe, trying the spirit of the country, and the extent of the patience and forbearance of its government, by avowed and authenticated pretensions: asserting that at the late peace we had consented to withdraw ourselves from all continental interference and connexion, and to confine and circumscribe our political cares and importance to our own island and its dependencies. It may be asked why I have thought it necessary to state this circumstance so particularly, seeing that no division or new discovery of parties was the result of it? My excuse will be, that this paragraph of his Majesty's Speech is a complete answer to all those paltry and futile accusations which have been preferred against ministers, for having concealed the true state of affairs, during

and strength. My conduct will invariably be regulated by a due consideration of the actual situation of Europe, and by a watchful solicitude for the permanent welfare of my people."

His Majesty's Speech, Nov. 3, 1802.

the

the discussion of the bill for the relief of the Prince of Wales ; upon which occasion they are accused of having given a false representation of the probabilities of the permanence of the Peace.—The interval between this message and the 8th of March, is but *three* weeks ! the whole complaint and charge are confined to three weeks ! But surely government did not encourage too sanguine a hope of the duration of peace, when they described it to be “an experiment”—when they said it had “left the Continent in an unsatisfactory state”—when they asked for “fifty thousand seamen for the defence and security of our own coasts.”—Really if there exists an individual who ever did confide in the *duration* of the late peace, I would counsel him to keep his own secret. It will be in vain to charge his drivelling as a crime upon other men. He is *Nature's* fool, and not Mr. Addington's.

At the opening of the new Parliament, it quickly appeared that the reflections of the recess, and the philosophy of the summer had diminished nothing of those violent passions which had disturbed the features of the resignation, and made the voluntary act of the late ministers look like constraint and disappointment. Their desire to return into the offices they had quitted, as it now appeared, under some error or misconception, was no longer dissembled, and the
houses

houses of parliament seemed to have changed their constitutional character and office for comitia and hustings, where our Peers and representatives, regardless of the king's prerogative, were occupied in daily canvass for the seats in his cabinet. The Lords Grenville*, Spencer, and Carlisle, without the smallest colour or care of dissimulation, held a language which openly pointed out to the executive government to take back the minister who had resigned in 1801. This was the design of every motion, the burthen of every amendment, the conclusion of every harangue. For this object, every species of despondency was again carefully spread amongst the people. The finances were decried, and the statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer disputed—even the resources of the country were attacked. For this the conduct of government was arraigned in all its foreign intercourse, and the crimes of Bonaparte preposterously transferred to Mr. Addington. For this, the Admiralty was reviled and calumniated, and those just and salutary reforms in the dock-yards, which will carry down the victorious name of St. Vincent to posterity, with every character of public virtue and devotion, represented as cruel persecutions. For this, the “insurrection of jobbers” in the dock-yards was abetted and defended, and the rebellion of

* Debates, Dec. 2.

boards and departments encouraged and promoted.

It has been said, that

Le jour d'un nouveau regne est le jour des ingrats;

but it does not appear that the late ministers had any complaints of this nature to prefer. It is true that the mass of political gratitude, which is apt enough to become inert and dull, was here set to work by a proper infusion of hope and speculation, and that the return of the old ministry, which was still as confidently looked for as it was strenuously attempted, might have no little share in reminding so many honourable members and *commissioners* of their original obligations. Perhaps in only one point of view was the position of the Ministry more difficult than it was rendered by this *speculative gratitude*, and that was by their own real regard and adherence for some of their predecessors. This sentiment they had allowed to cripple their defence in the debate upon the peace of Amiens, and to preclude them from going into the state of the nation, and recording the unhappy circumstances of the country at the time that the care of its affairs devolved upon them; and this sentiment always led them to hope and desire the return of Mr. Pitt into the Cabinet, and that he would one day form a part of their administration. It is not, indeed, to be wondered at
that

that this attachment and affection, the habit of all his life, should still prevail in the bosom of Mr. Addington, and it could only be lamented if it were not returned with the same warmth of sincerity and the same constancy of friendship.

The first part of the Session shews us Mr. Pitt courted by both parties, the object of their common worship and desire, severally invited by each to strengthen or overthrow the Ministry which he had himself installed by the strongest eulogium, whose measures he had individually supported, and who had committed the single crime of appearing to justify and deserve the characters he had given of them.

It were curious to consider what inducements could have been suggested by the eloquence and ingenuity of Lord Grenville, to prevail upon his right honourable relation to abandon them ! It cannot be supposed that he urged to Mr. Pitt the care of consistency and regard to his own reputation ! That he argued that it was incumbent upon him, or becoming, to desert the ministry, *because* he had promised to support them, or *because* he had applauded the measures and the principle of their administration. One cannot bring oneself to imagine, that the noble Lord represented to him that he ought to join Mr. Windham and his lordship, *because* they were bent upon immediate war, while Mr.

Pitt himself was decided to prolong peace to the last moment of endurance. It is more natural to enquire what arguments his great abilities could invent to gain over his right honourable cousin, *in spite* of those circumstances; by what address he could keep them out of his eye; by what consummate policy and skill he could lead his mind away from them, while he presented those inducements (whatever they were) private or public, of ambition or consanguinity, by which he was at last crowned with success in this extraordinary negotiation. I confess that if any single thing could make me regret, at this juncture, the absence of his Lordship from his Majesty's councils, it would be the conviction which this circumstance presents of the unparalleled skill and ability, and of the absolutely unrivalled powers of his mind in this science of negotiation. I have not forgotten his lordship's letter to the First Consul of France; but the diplomatist who could persuade Mr. Pitt upon this occasion, appears to me the sole Minister capable of converting Bonaparte!

In the mean time, notwithstanding the open recommendations, or rather dictates for his return to the treasury, which were unremitted in either house of parliament, that right honourable gentleman, whose health and avocations did not permit his attendance in parliament, continued his assurances of support to the ministers:

eters: but it caused some degree of surprise that no authority was given in either house of parliament to any gentleman in his confidence to disclaim and deny all part and knowledge in the unconstitutional mention that had been made of his name. It does rather appear as if there had been a little political jilting and flirtation with both suitors; and one cannot help thinking one might have seen

_____ illum tereti cervice reflexum

Mulcere alternos, et corpora fingere linguâ.

So far, however, as I have had opportunity to *observe*, I think I may venture to assert, that the Ministers maintained their usual good correspondence, and received the usual confirmations of support and friendship from Mr. Pitt till March last, and some time rather advanced in that month. Upon her Majesty's birthday, in January, I have heard that some trifling form and solemnity confirmed the bond, and that Mr. Pitt, who dined with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, took occasion to declare that he would come to town and give government his assistance in parliament upon the first question of importance, and upon any which they might think required his support; but having been at a distance at that time, and unwilling now to make *particular* enquiries, I state it only
as

as *report*. By stating this *report*, I do not mean to discredit it: upon the contrary, my *observation* at another *time* and *place*, leads me to vouch for its extreme probability. If, after all, there be *any* error, it is in the date not the truth of the transaction. The friendship, however, continued till the period I have assigned. Nor can I state it as having been *absolutely* retracted or dissolved till about the third week in April, although there remained, in the interval, no appearances of its effect or existence. Very early in this month, it is well known, that a plan was in agitation for the admission of that right honourable gentlemen, and some of his friends, into the Cabinet. *As far as I have observed*, this negotiation originated with Lord Melville, and was conducted by him; nor do I at all fear being mistaken in stating, that the intentions and conduct of that noble Lord were fair, honourable, and impartial. I have great satisfaction in saying so, because I know a contrary opinion prevails, and because a subsequent vote of his lordship's has a tendency to maintain and encourage that opinion. Those persons, however, who had the means of near observation, believed that the noble lord was almost as much hurt and disappointed at the extravagant proposition upon which the negotiation went off, as the Ministers themselves were.

The

The war was now evidently approaching^{*}; and, besides those personal habits of friendship, which at all times governed the mind of Mr. Addington, the great talents and popularity of Mr. Pitt, amongst the monied persons, must have rendered him a most desirable acquisition to any administration in which he would take a part.—I tread here, and I am very sensible of it, upon tender ground; I feel that I may be uttering things better liked in silence, but not better suppressed; for the public and posterity are interested in the truth, and have a right to it. That I shall not much, or materially mislead them, I have no light reason to be satisfied; but neither do I pretend to have observed *every thing*, nor think it quite prudent to set down every thing I may have observed. If I fall into any mistake, or misstate the smallest point of importance to the character of any of the distinguished persons involved in the subject of these Remarks, the error is involuntary: and it is evident that it is so, since there is so much ease and so great an interest in refuting it. It might, perhaps, be thought too much to appeal to Lord Melville for the accuracy of *anonymous* allegations; but the public will judge whether, if I am capable of deceiving it, Mr. Pitt and

^{*} The King's message had been delivered on the 8th of March, and the negotiations for peace were at this period very unpromising.

other gentlemen are likely to submit to the following *mis-representations* !

In the negotiation which his Lordship conducted, I think it proper that it should be known, that there was no obstacle upon the part of ministry to his Lordship's return, with Mr. Pitt and others of his friends ; I do not say upon a footing of equality with Mr. Addington and others of the present administration, but *beyond it*. It is proper that it should be known, that the treaty did not go off (as has been pretended) on account of the want of a message *from a quarter, too high to be mentioned*, a communication which would not have been wanting in due time, if the negotiation could have been brought to an issue upon the terms I have mentioned ; but that it broke off upon the positive unalterable demand of Mr. Pitt himself, to bring back with him the Lords Grenville and Spencer, with other noble and honourable persons, who had disapproved of *every* measure of the government, who were in the habit of *personal* incivility and disrespect, and who were adverse to the whole spirit and principle of the administration.

We have now seen that those recommendations, or rather dictates to the Sovereign, with which the Sessions opened, those loud demands for the return of Mr. Pitt to the confidence of his Majesty, have been faithfully and honourably *repaid*.

Lord

Lord Grenville *would* replace Mr. Pitt in power, and it had been very ungrateful if Mr. Pitt had forgotten the obligation. Thus have these illustrious persons maintained unbroken the bands of their political connexion, in spite of their difference of opinion upon the greatest political occurrences—and thus has Mr. Addington been deprived of Mr. Pitt's friendship, notwithstanding every one of his measures has received his support and approbation!

The discussion of this extraordinary transaction, has led me somewhat past the period of his Majesty's message of the 8th of March, in which the necessity had been announced of adopting measures of precaution, with regard to France; which proceeding of the ministry, and the subsequent armament they proposed, so far from producing that unanimity of parties which might have been expected, and which at first it appeared to have effected, only exasperated and laid bare the depth and foulness of their rank and mortified ambition. Will it be believed, that upon this occasion the "war-faction*," (to use the phrase of the First Consul of France) which had treated every moment of peace as a compromise of the national honour and security, which had incessantly urged, railed, and attempted to

* They were styled "Bloodhounds" in a print which is in the exclusive interest of Mr. Pitt.

intimidate

intimidate the government into immediate war, now turned, suddenly as the wind, and shifted their principles like a sail? Let us hear the language of the manly, consistent Mr. Windham*! “He hoped that it would not be supposed that the opposers of the peace would be foremost to propose the renewal of hostilities! the *very reverse* would be found to be the legitimate result of the principles they had embraced: they had chiefly opposed that peace because its terms put the country out of a condition to go to war again!!! There were no persons holding his opinions who could contemplate the renewal of war without serious alarm†!!!”

Mr. Canning said, “The message had excited throughout the country the greatest *anxiety* and *alarm*,” and complained of the “great degree of docility which the people had *of late* manifested, and of their strong disposition to give Ministers credit, &c ‡.”

Mr. Thomas Grenville declared that there was no man more ready or more eager to vote

* In the Debate on the Address, November 23, Mr. Windham said, “Not being in an official situation, I am not sufficiently informed to advise particularly—but I think we should weigh well in what situation we shall be when the war comes upon us, for come it will, and sooner than I wish to say. I THINK IT WOULD BE THE WISER WAY TO ANTICIPATE THE BLOW.”

† March 9. Vide Parliamentary Register. Debate upon the Address.

‡ Ibid.

for

for the address, especially if it should be likely to procure PEACE and TRANQUILLITY *!!!

Dr. Lawrence professed, "his wishes were for PEACE!!! He expected it should be proved that the war, if it *must* now be renewed, was indispensably necessary to the safety and honor of the empire †!!!"

I will not disgust the reader with more of this opprobrious palinody, nor detain him long from the reflexions it must excite. But it is necessary that I should fix his attention upon these miraculous conversions, because he will shortly find that they were so sincere and compunctious, and the new reluctance and aversion to hostilities so pious and invincible, as to induce the sect to throw every obstacle in the way of officering the militia, to discredit our constitutional army altogether, and with the zeal of true proselytism to preach up humiliation and despondency, and decry that wicked confidence in our own state, and means of salvation, which political methodists know to be the most infallible sign of reprobation.

It is too recent in recollection for it to be necessary for me to relate with what sentiments the public received this new creed of the most serene and pacific war-faction; and it might be

* March 9. Vide Parliamentary Register. Debate upon the Address.

† Ibid.

thought ludicrous and out of the scope of the present topic, to advert to the surprise and astonishment which General Bonaparte is said to have manifested upon discovering the long mistake and mis-apprehension under which he had lived with regard to it.

I cannot, however, pass over this point altogether, because I am of opinion that the language now held by the new opposition had a considerable effect upon the negotiations which were carried on from this period, with encreased activity and interest, and assumed a tone exceedingly categorical and decisive. Doubtless, it is impossible for me, or any other individual, to prove that the First Consul had not originally fixed his resolution, and that he had not been always altogether determined upon war. In this case it must be admitted, that he derived not his first motive from the extraordinary language of Mr. Windham and his colleagues. But I shall then contend, that this language must have operated to encourage and confirm his intention, which neither Mr. Windham, nor any other person can deny, might possibly have wavered, or have finally given way. The First Consul, in his memorable *exposé* to the legislative body, had expressly stated, that "this country could find no ally upon the Continent, and that without allies, and single-handed, she was unable to sustain a war with France." I believe

believe this defiance was received with indignation by every Englishman, and by Mr. Windham among the rest; I had once thought, even more than by the rest. I believe too, that it was resented not more for its audacity, than its absolute falsehood, and that there did not exist at that time a single individual who was not prepared to contradict and disprove it. How then must it have satisfied and delighted the first Consul to learn, that as soon as the King's message had taught us to think in earnest upon the subject, and as soon as a distinct appearance and approach of war had become visible in England, even those statesmen who had most invoked and provoked it, were become sudden converts to his opinion, and openly declared the truth of it! With what transports must he not have heard M. Otto translate from the debates in the English papers this express statement of Mr. Windham, that "he could not contemplate the renewal of hostilities without serious alarm, and that he had chiefly opposed the peace *because it had put the country out of a condition to renew the war?*"

One cannot help figuring to oneself the amazement of this august Personage at finding that he had been speaking truth as Moliere's Citizen spoke prose, *without suspecting it*; and one fancies all those little tender conscientious reproaches which he must have made

made to his own mind for the injustice he had been guilty of, and the ill-opinion he had entertained of the candid, manly, and consistent Mr. Windham ! Certainly had he sooner been made acquainted with the Right Honourable Gentleman's sentiments upon the peace, and upon the impossibility of this country's going to war again, there had been no occasion for accusing him of complicity with the contrivers of the infernal machine ! Could he have foreknown the Right Honourable Gentleman's thoughts of the Militia, and the Army of Reserve, and the training of the country, he would not have been ungrateful enough to consider him as the chief of an atrocious "war-faction," an implacable enemy of France, and a conspirator against the life of her first magistrate !

The anxious period which intervened between his Majesty's message of the 8th of March, and the return of his Ambassador from Paris, does not appear to me to furnish any thing connected with the state of parties, more interesting than the avowal of these sentiments by Mr. Windham and Mr. W. Elliot, who had been Secretaries at War under the late administration. Both these gentlemen were now discovered to be adverse to the system and principle of militia forces altogether ; an opinion which did not so much surprise the admirers of the constitution and of that constitutional force, upon any other
ground

ground, as because in their official situations, they had severally appeared the most zealous advocates and promoters of this species of army. Mr. Elliot, who now opposed recruiting the Irish militia at four guineas per man, was reminded by the Attorney General for Ireland, that he himself (Mr. Elliot) had brought in a bill * for recruiting it at six guineas ; and Mr. Windham † was put in mind that during the time he had been in office, the militia in England had been augmented to an unprecedented degree, and the militia of both Scotland and Ireland *instituted* and begun !! Thus it appeared, that it was not in the solitary instance of the negotiations at Lisle, but in great general measures of domestic import, executive government, and legislation, that the manly, consistent Mr. Windham, had not only lent his name, countenance, and authority, against his opinion, but that he had even condescended to become the official instrument and organ of measures which he disapproved and condemned !! It always remained however to be accounted for, both by this Right Honourable Gentleman and Mr. Elliot, why they felt themselves more obliged to declare their opposition at one time than at another ; why they could submit their docile conscience to the hand of Mr. Pitt, and shew such a restive spirit of mutiny under the

* March 15.

† March 16.

guidance

guidance of his successor!!! It will be said they were in office at one time, and out of it at the other ; but if this is an excuse, it follows that to be neutral in things you disapprove, is less blameable than to be active in them ; and that you may originate measures you condemn, but not suffer them to be promoted by other persons.

While the artifices, and possibly the hesitation of the mind of the First Consul of France protracted the negotiations, the New Opposition did not fail to urge and goad ministers to a premature disclosure of the intercourse which was taking place between the two governments ; a circumstance which it is necessary to take notice of in this place, because it produced Lord Grenville in circumstances similar to Mr. Windham, and proved that no part of the New Opposition would submit in any shape to be hampered and restrained by the parts they had acted in the late government, or by a weak and scrupulous regard to past habits, professions, and character, any more than by their specific engagements, and promises of support.

Certainly after the manners and tone which the noble Lord had held in office, it was the boldest of all attempts to appear in the part of the chief of an opposition ; and his great abilities, and the respect which is due to them, are in nothing more evident than that he is able to sustain

sustain it at all: there are so many subjects upon which an ordinary mind would have been precluded from taking part! To common men, it would have appeared almost impossible to move eternally for papers—to require messages and communications from the crown—to complain of the people being kept in the dark—of ministers shrinking from responsibility—to stop a malt bill—to dispute the prosperity of the revenue—to censure a treaty of their own drawing up—in short, to demand whatever they had refused—to condemn whatever conduct they had pursued—to attack where they had promised to support—and to be in complete uniform variance and hostility with the whole tenour of their life, character, and principles.

It would not be doing even the little justice I am able, to the subject I am treating of, if I were to omit, that the style and language of opposition was much degenerated in the new hands to which it had transferred itself. The late minority, though it had been treated as a low contemptible faction of levellers and jacobins, never dealt in abuse and incivility so largely as the great aristocracy which had now succeeded to their place. *Absurd, incapable*, and grosser epithets were liberally applied to his Majesty's councils and ministers, and by no member of either house more frequently than by the noble Lord, who, while a minister was not very tolerant

rant in debate, not very apt to forgive even a question or an allusion ! It has been said, that

Honores mutant mores,

but the converse of the proposition was now established to be true. I will not say of the noble Lord, that none but himself could be his parallel, but that none but himself could be so perfectly and entirely the opposite and converse of himself. It is an old axiom that things alike cannot be the same ; but that identity cannot be destroyed by the most perfect antithesis and distinct dissimilarity, we have Lord Grenville for a demonstration !

In order the better to prick and goad the ministers to a discovery of the state of the negotiations, and to shake the public confidence in their talents and premanence in office, notice was now given of a motion of enquiry and censure by Mr. Patten, *orgtine*, upon this occasion, of Mr. Windham, and the ex-war-party. Whether by the force employed, it was intended to give a mortifying estimate of the supposed strength and ability of ministers to resist, or whether the public were guilty of injustice towards the abilities and consequence of the honourable gentleman, I am not disposed to enquire. The motion was often put off, and it was not without some astonishment that the House found it seriously

ously brought on for discussion, after the return of the King's Ambassador, and the publication of his Majesty's declaration, together with the papers presented by his command to both Houses of Parliament, upon the 18th of May. Those, however, who had near opportunities of observing, waited for this motion with an impatience of curiosity not greater than it deserved, as it was destined to clear up the long mystery of Mr. Pitt's absence from his parliamentary duty, to make known his opinion of the state of public affairs, and to declare what effect his late unsuccessful negotiation had operated upon his public feelings, principles, and engagements.

Upon the question of the Address* to his Majesty, Mr. Pitt had made his first appearance in the House of Commons during the present parliament. But owing to a circumstance† of no very great importance, and foreign to the object of these remarks, the public were but very imperfectly in possession of the sentiments he had delivered, and of the sense in which they were to be received, as connected with parties and political obligations. In the speech which preceded the vote which the right honourable gentleman gave *for* the Address, a near observer could not mistake or overlook a very marked coldness, and studied personal indifference towards the ministers, and the first minister in

* May 23d.

† Exclusion of the Reporters.

H

particular

particular. Not one expression of regard, not even the form and habit of his *right honourable friend*, escaped the reserved and cautious lips of the most CONSTANT, ACTIVE, and ZEALOUS supporter of Mr. Addington! According to the new religion of the party which Mr. Pitt had lately insisted upon bringing back with him into the King's councils, his conscience enabled him to support the measures without commending the men.—Content, however, for the moment with the effect of his cold, repulsive neutrality; having alarmed one part of his hearers, afflicted another, and perplexed all; the house saw him pleased to divide *with* the right honourable gentleman, whose credit and influence, not indeed every word that he had uttered, but every tone and gesture he had used, had been calculated to discourage and discredit!

The Address thus actively, constantly, and zealously supported, was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 331, against an amendment proposed by Mr. Grey*.

Upon this occasion it is necessary to observe that Mr. Fox delivered a speech of the utmost eloquence, but stigmatized both by ministers and by the New Opposition as singularly danger-

* For the Address,	- - -	398
Against it,	- - -	67

331

ous,

ous, and calculated only to unnerve and relax the spirit and efforts of the country. The purport of the amendment*, and of the motive assigned by its supporters was, that the government had not been sincere in its endeavours to continue the peace. That government which had been uniformly reproached by the New Opposition ; with having acted tamely, submissively, and I know not what, in the vain and sanguine hope of prolonging the peace, was now taxed by the Old Opposition with never having wished to maintain it at all, and with having taken the first, and that a needless opportunity of breaking it!! Upon one side of the speaker's chair, the ministers heard themselves accused of having caused the war by their temporizing and spiritless policy ; upon the other, by their violence and insincerity. Here, they ought to have declared war for the first aggression ; there, not even for the last.

It is evident that these attacks must have frustrated and disarmed each other, and that no defence could be necessary for a system of conduct which was arraigned upon such opposite and hostile grounds. The ministry had now the satisfaction to find themselves fully possessed of the public confidence and opinion,

* In the House of Lords the minority divided only ten upon a similar amendment, moved by Lord King.

which

which always lies between the extremes of contending parties. The war itself was an irresistible proof that they would not compromise with the honour or essential interests of the empire, and the papers which were before the House and the public, evinced, not only the sincerest disposition to avoid a rupture, but a degree of forbearance and moderation, which being accompanied by great firmness and resolution, most wonderfully coincided with the sentiments and the characteristic temper of the people.

Both Oppositions were now reduced to a very singular and embarrassing dilemma, for with the weakness and dependence of ministers had perished all the motive of the old and all the obligation of the new to support them*. To attack them however was difficult, not merely because it was flying in the face of public opinion very strongly pronounced, but because they were, in point of fact, forced to combat each other, while the ministers remained invulnerable in the middle. Upon the other hand, the still-growing popularity of the ministers was a common grievance, and they were urged by reciprocal interests, to make, before it should be too late, some effort to shake or to stop it. We shall now see the effect of these councils upon Mr. Patten's motion, which (as it often

* Vide p. 17.

pleases fortune to bring forth the greatest effects from the most trifling causes) was destined to lay bare the secret mind of Mr. Pitt, to justify the sagacity of Mr. Canning, and to be the last grand comment upon ambitious friendships and political consciences.

It will not be expected of me to say more of a motion so recent,* and so strongly engraven upon the public mind, than that Mr. Pitt, not being able in his *conscience* to exculpate the ministers of the crimes they were charged with, gave his vote for deferring their arraignment. He proposed that the accusation, and the censure and punishment which were to follow it, should be left hanging from day to day over their heads, to be renewed and enforced the first time it should please Mr. Patten to pray the judgment of the house upon these unacquitted, uncondemned, but respited delinquents, to whom his Majesty had confided his government, and to whose guidance the nation looked up for the sole chance of escaping from the dreadful predicament into which it had relapsed by the perfidy and ambition of the French government. It is painful for me to record that fifty-five members of the House of Commons were found

* Mr. Patten's motion concluded with asserting, "that by their conduct the King's ministers had proved themselves to be unworthy of the confidence of the House, and unfit to conduct the affairs of the nation."—June 3d.

of the same sentiments as Mr. Pitt, and that Mr. Canning * still dissented from him as thinking his vote too lenient and favourable to Mr. Addington and his colleagues.

It is here the place for me to submit a few reflections, if without any impeachment of the reverence I bear for the talents of Mr. Pitt and the virtues of Mr. Canning, they may be permitted me. They shall at any rate be short and immediately relevant to the subject. Certainly I am not the only person (who has had opportunities of observing,) that has asked himself what greater degree of hostility, what species of more aggressive and unrelenting opposition, Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville (for they are not to be separated since the failure of their negotiation in April,) could have exercised, if ministers, instead of being the objects of their primary panegyric and recommendation, instead of having their pledge of support, instead of having acted with vigour and with temper, and instead of being crowned with success in the great part of their measures, and with applause, even where the crimes of the French government had disap-

* Mr. Canning declared that he should give his vote freely and conscientiously for the censure.

Mr Pitt found himself in the minority, the votes being,

For his motion 56

Against it 338

conduct the affairs of the nation, June 24.

pointed

of

pointed their endeavours; I say, in the case that Mr. Addington had been the greatest enemy Mr. Pitt had ever known, if he had proved the weakest, most incapable, unfortunate, and wicked Minister that had ever existed, what possible asperity, malevolence, and rancour of attack, could he have experienced which he did not now sustain from the party of his predecessors, who were pledged to give him their zealous, constant, and active support? Not that I suspect or impugn the motives of Mr. Pitt: it is evident they were imperious, compulsory, and irresistible.

Who that sees Lord Chatham in the cabinet, which Mr. Patten would impeach, but must admire the stern Roman virtue of Mr. Pitt, which could not bend to give a vote of acquittal even to a brother? The country may well congratulate itself upon possessing so rigid a patriot in these pliant times, when so many public duties are daily sacrificed to ambition and connexion.

I know, indeed, that to Mr. Canning, Mr. Pitt has not appeared to have acted with sufficient energy and character in this memorable vote. He expected, from the inflexible fortitude of his right honourable friend, that he would have declared for the impeachment of his brother and his friend.—But such severity was, even by the Romans themselves, thought above proof,

proof, and extreme ; and they gave the distinct appellation of Manlian virtues, Manlian commands, and Manlian duties, to all those great acts of self-devotedness which were exerted at the expence of the ties of blood, and the tender relations of private life. Mr. Canning's indignation has carried him so far, that he has scarcely since made his appearance in the House ; but I hope, he will forgive the *weakness* of his right honourable friend, and return—His infirmity is human.

Frater est, Pamphile, difficile est ;

Mr. Addington, too, was the friend of his whole life, from early infancy to the hour at least in which he became his successor, if not to that in which the negotiation broke off !

The history of parties, has now been brought down to a period, since which I confess, that I look upon the attachment and deference of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for Mr. Pitt as a weakness, the only one I have discovered in his character, and which, as a near observer, I know I do not mistake, in attributing to the most amiable and purest source. Still it must be permitted me to doubt, whether, after all that has passed, it be not a very great discouragement to the real friends of government and of the country, to think they see too much respect and deference for an opinion, which they do not consider to be altogether
free

free from party, and even hostile views? Nothing can do Mr. Addington more honour, than the readiness I will not call it, but the eagerness he has always discovered to replace Mr. Pitt in the confidence of his Sovereign. I am convinced, that whoever has had an opportunity of observing, will believe, that even at this moment he is as strongly inclined to comply with every just and honourable wish of Mr. Pitt, as he was found to be in the late negotiation. Nor do I blame this disinterested disposition. Much, however, as I respect the motive of this conduct, it appears impossible to approve its tendency and effect. First of all, because, as long as Mr. Pitt makes it a *sine quâ non*, to bring back Lord Grenville with him into the cabinet, I have observed, that every negotiation will fail. There is an obstacle, if appearances are not very deceitful, even *higher* than Mr. Addington's reluctance, who is compelled by honour not to admit into the council with him, a man who has uniformly and undistinguishingly condemned and opposed every measure of his administration, not without personal incivility and marked disrespect.

Secondly, because the parliamentary conduct of Mr. Pitt, (notwithstanding some vacillation since the ill-success of his *previous question*) appears decidedly hostile, and calculated in a

particular manner to embarrass the administration of the finances *. I need scarcely point out the debates † upon this subject, in which that right honourable gentleman has taken a part, nor the effect of his interference, which has been to cut off about a million and a quarter from the resources of the year; and to raise a cry that the faith of government was violated by including the Stockholder in the Income Tax, with every other species of proprietor. Although it is not altogether within the scope of this discourse to discuss public measures, yet it is often impossible to explain the state of parties, without some examination of the questions which discover their character and motives. And I am compelled, as a near observer, to remark upon this occasion, that the arguments of Mr. Pitt did not appear to have so much weight, as his authority, in obtaining exemp-

* So early as the 25th of February, Lord Grenville had disputed Lord Auckland's statement of the finances, asserting, that instead of a surplus of nine millions in the revenue, there was a deficit of four. On the 26th of July, however, the whole of the six millions and a half surplus of the consolidated fund were voted for the supplies of the year, upon the motion of Mr. Addington, *in the presence of Mr. Pitt, who made no objection* to the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; nor has any motion been made by Mr. Gregor, who had given notice——If these gentlemen are acting properly at *present*, as I do not deny, how will they justify their previous conduct?

† July 9th. 13th. 15th.

tions

tions for the indolent capital of the Stock-holder, while every other species of annual Income is liable to the just exigency of the State. I do therefore think the deference of government for Mr. Pitt has been prejudicial to the country in this instance* in particular; and it appears to me, that the inconvenience will be shortly acknowledged when they shall have to replace the contribution of the Stock-holder by new taxes upon the generality of other property and consumption. Mr. Pitt's complicated proposition † for taking the aggregate of rent, tithes, and poor-rates, as the basis of the Income-tax, if it was friendly in intention, had the misfortune to be delivered in tones of hostility and defiance, and it must be submitted, whether it be not very discouraging to the real friends of ministers, to hear them told without reserve by *any* member of the House, that, "if they are hostile to *his* plans, they set themselves against the best mode of raising the

* No person can be plainly absurd enough to contend, that an hundred pounds in a man's pocket is not equally contributable, whether he has received them from his Steward or his Stock-broker. The only question therefore is, whether it be a breach of faith to take the tax without expence and inconvenience at the Bank, instead of running after the public creditor when he has carried his dividend to his closet. This cry, however, of Mr. Pitt's, has cost us one million and a quarter from the annual resources of the war.

Et dubitamus adhuc virtutem extendere factis?

† Debate, July 15th.

supplies,

supplies, &c.” Not that any body has a greater respect for *his* plans (in the department of revenue) than myself; but that I cannot conceive why the House or the Ministers are to entertain the species of deference exacted from them for *his* plans, without *his* responsibility; or in what constitutional point of view it can be pretended, that the members who have lately seen more than a million per annum surrendered in conformity to *his* plans, are blindly to consider every man as hostile to the revenue, who will not vote for *his* plans, in opposition to the propositions of the executive government.

Nothing, I confess, would give me more satisfaction in this extreme difficulty and most arduous crisis of our state, than to hear Mr. Pitt firmly and zealously giving his support to the King's servants. His financial skill, his commanding eloquence, and his still great influence in the country, would be a tower of strength to his Majesty's government. The public would be well satisfied, I have no reason to doubt, if the right honourable gentleman would accept a seat in the Cabinet; but it will not endure, I believe, that the prerogative should be broken down, or his Majesty's free choice and judgment interfered with, by any species of dictation or preliminary condition. It is evident, from experience, that Mr. Pitt cannot force the Grenville's back into power
with

with him. The question therefore is, whether any private obligations or engagements to that party ought to deprive the empire of his services at this moment? and whether he has not amply acquitted his faith towards them by breaking off the late negotiation? This point I will not dare to examine, more especially because I have not the faculty to discover what engagements or what bond of honour he can have entered into with those gentlemen, more sacred, solemn, and inviolable, than the pledge of active, zealous, and constant support he gave to Mr. Addington in February 1801. Neither should I expect from the known virtues and disinterestedness of Lord Grenville that he would not be satisfied with the late efforts of Mr. Pitt in his favour, or refuse to release him from an unprofitable contract, which militates with the essential interests of the empire, which the great abilities of that Financier are so well calculated to sustain.

If, however, there exist circumstances which have escaped my observation, or are secret and unknown, and it is in point of fact impracticable for Mr. Pitt to take a share in his Majesty's government, or to give his servants sincere and effectual support at this crisis (which were exceedingly to be lamented) then I have no scruple to express my conviction, that the more direct and open are his hostilities, and the less respect and deference

deference are exhibited for his authority, the less distraction, embarrassment, and discredit, will be in the power of his adherents to create or disseminate. It is not clear, that Mr. Pitt will be able to acquit himself as the chief of a party with the same *eclat* and success, as in the robes of office. His vote upon Mr. Patten's motion, is generally considered as a false step; its effects have been more fatal to his credit and popularity, than any measure he could have taken; and are scarcely less injurious to his public character, than his *unaccounted-for* and *unaccountable* resignation in 1801.

He is therefore, by no means as much to be dreaded as an opponent, as he is to be desired for a friend. His habits and his talents, his passions, and even his tones and gestures, are calculated for office and authority. Neither do the public at this moment entertain that unqualified admiration of the mere gift of eloquence, as to prefer it to judgment, knowledge, firmness, equanimity, and other qualities of a minister, which they have lately learned to esteem and applaud; nor can any opposition be seriously formidable as long as ministers pursue the same temperate, but vigorous course, which has enabled them to triumph over every possible obstacle and impediment. *

Considering

* Since I am upon this subject of opposition, I cannot resist the temptation of expressing the desire which I have lately entertained,

Considering indeed the circumstances of the state, and the unparalleled dangers which approach us, one would naturally have looked for implicit unanimity, and co-operation from every part of the empire. Amongst the sacrifices we are called upon to make for our defence and preservation, the very foremost is that of our interested, unjust, and ambitious passions. The first offering upon the altar of our country, should be private rivalries, and party-hatreds. To destroy the confidence of the people in their rulers, in their armies, or in-
 tertained, for the translation of Mr. Pitt and his party to the opposite side of the House. A great deal of perplexity arises

Armorum facie & graiarum errore Jubarum.

One cannot accustom one's ears to hear the measures of the Chancellor of the Exchequer arraigned or impeded by his *Right Honourable Friends behind him*. He ought to be able to see his opponents and they to look him in the face. Perhaps too, the Speaker himself would like a little topographical hint upon *which side* of the Debate those gentlemen *meant* to speak, for of late they have always *voted* with the Minister, and *spoken* against him. This comes very naturally from the new moral doctrine of "Men, not Measures;" but I confess I like the old customs best. Mr. Addington's situation is really very dangerous and perplexing, particularly in *the Councils of War*, where the heaviest battery is often opened upon his rear, and his flanks are very much exposed to the attack of his honorable Friends, who fight *upon his side against him*. In the name of Candour, what have Mr. Pitt and Mr. Canning to do *behind the Treasury Bench*? "A plague on you! Do you call this backing of your Friends?"

their

their resources, were the very worst species of treason. At such a time, every man's knowledge, experience, and talent, is the property of the State; there ought to be no *sides* of the house, no opposition. Can it be endured then to see all the experience acquired in the public service, all the weight and authority of past office and employment, directed to spread alarm and discouragement, or to impede and embarrass the public service? One thinks one sees altar against altar, and government against government, when the parts of an opposition are so distributed and sustained, as that the persons, who have been secretaries at war, oppose the recruiting of the militia; secretaries of state, attack state papers and negotiations; and chancellors of the exchequer, the taxes*. And when one observes senators, and statesmen, who have scarce turned their backs on the King's Cabinet, opposing and contradicting, and thwarting their own measures and the principles of their own administration, one thinks

* It is singular that even those reforms in the naval departments, which have been so much opposed by the adherents and partizans of the late admiralty-board, are its own offspring—that it had presented the abuses, frauds, and peculations, and was pledged to bring forward the enquiry. They were stated, in the administration of Lord Spencer, to amount to 3 millions annually.

one

one beholds a faction more profoundly and essentially corrupt and perfidious than there is any mention of in the history of nations.

Thus we see that after official death, the same cares and employments do not survive in the political shades, as in the poetical—We cannot say,

————— *Quæ gratia currûm*

Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes

Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos ;

but, on the contrary, we find them tormented with remorse and aversion for all their prior studies and pursuits, and haunted with the antipathy of every former passion and delight.

I know that I have made use of strong words, but I know that they are not stronger than the truth warrants, and the occasion demands. But if I seem to any person to use harsher terms than might have been found, and to brand with more ignominy than is necessary, the profligacy I deplore, I would ask if these are times to govern phrases, to frame sentences, and observe etiquettes and punctilios ! What, when Lord Temple demands places for his family*, (insatiable family !)

* Mr. Thomas Grenville has not attended for a considerable time in his place. It is beneath his great importance to promote or assent to a single measure for the defence of his country under ministers not nominated by his family.—The Army of Reserve, the Bill for the general arming and training of his majesty's subjects, the great measures of finance, have all been deprived of his assistance and authority, even of his countenance ! — He will not grace the benches of opposition

family!) when his family insist upon naming the King's Minister; when Mr. Pitt refuses to serve his Sovereign, unless he can force into the cabinet the Grenvilles who are forcing him into it; when Mr. Windham will only vote *pro forma* for military law and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act, upon the burst of Irish Rebellion, and the massacre of the chief criminal judge*; when Mr. Canning avows† that "his opposition is not to measures but to men;" that "the men are every thing, and the measures nothing;" when the whole system and anti-principle (if I may hazard such a word) of the late administration, is to vilify and discredit the

when he dares not to oppose. He will not lend even his presence and neutrality to the plans for arming the country, doubtless because it cannot now be saved, by any men but those who abandoned it the year before the last!

I am persuaded, however, that the country will very deeply resent the conduct of every one of its representatives who acts like Mr. T. Grenville. These absences are perverse, peevish, and, perhaps, unconstitutional: they act, however, in a contrary sense to what is intended. If ever there were a case where silence inferred consent, it is here: for it cannot be suspected, that with a *possibility of opposing*, we should have lost the benefit of Mr. Grenville's opinion and eloquence. Where I to hazard a conjecture, it would be this, that the Right Honourable Gentleman is preparing a very *alarming* speech for the last day of the Session, a speech of *effect*, which will send a portion of the House home panic-struck, to spread *proper* sentiments among their constituents.

* July 28.

† Parl. Reg. Dec. 8.

government, of whose measures they dare not but approve; when Mr. Canning would impeach, and Mr. Pitt would keep impeachment hanging over the heads of those ministers, whose conduct in every individual instance he has defended or applauded; when popular and factious cries are adopted to intercept the resources of the exchequer, when the militia is decried and discredited, not by jacobins and traitors, but by ex-secretaries at war, and ex-ministers of the finances; when discouragement and despondency are spread among the people by great military characters, and we are warned of the capture of the capital, and the surrender of the country! when I see the House of Commons transmuted into a council of war*, shall I call it, or a council of alarm, discouragement, and trepidation! when every cry, and every artifice is adopted to discredit the measures of government, and destroy the confidence of the country—I ask if this be a moment to stop for nice and deliberate expressions? and whether these gentlemen are entitled to so much deference from others, who are so careless of their own character and reputation, as to be not only at variance, but in direct hostility and

* With the highest degree of respect and consideration for Mr. Abbot, I must venture to say, as an observer, that it would have given satisfaction, if he had thought himself warranted to interrupt these discussions.

antithesis with their own principles and measures, with their characters, and their whole lives?

The ministers certainly could not be confronted by a minority of more abilities, of more personal weight in the country, from connexion and property, and of more influence from the mass of former obligation, which during seventeen years they have conferred with no sparing hand. The utter want, however, of principle, and even of pretext for their opposition, and the too great confidence in their own talents and importance, which has led to very extraordinary confessions, has deprived this party of every thing which could render it popular or formidable; besides which, I have observed a very general apprehension to prevail in the case that they were to be once more entrusted with the guidance of affairs, lest upon the approach of any great danger or calamity which might threaten the country, they should again abandon their posts, with as much precipitation as they did in 1801.

As far as public opinion is concerned, this sentiment must long be fatal to their return to power, and it may be added, that no small proportion of those persons who most strenuously supported them, will never pardon the resignation, because they certainly did give their votes unqualified, and assented to measures they did

not

not always approve of, upon the supposition, that they had no choice but to strengthen a government which they considered as bound and pledged to abide the fate of the country. These persons consider themselves as having been cheated out of their former support upon false pretences, and they will no doubt insist upon a full and satisfactory explanation of the real causes of these resignations, before they will give their confidence a second time. Indeed, what would be the situation of the country (at this crisis of foreign danger, internal difficulty, and Irish Rebellion) under a ministry whom it would be in the power of the most insignificant member of the House to displace at any moment, by simply bringing forward the Irish Catholic question?

I am not aware of more than one case in which Mr. Fox and *his* minority could be considered as a possible administration, and that is the success of the invasion, or some other great disaster which should lay us at the feet of France. He might, perhaps, be the vice-president of the Britannic Republic, but there is little prospect of his ever being the minister of an English King.

Of the ministers it will be permitted me to say, that I think they have hitherto deserved well of the country; and that they have been called to act under circumstances in which it
was

was impossible to have done so, without possessing great ability, great prudence, and great fortitude. They have certainly had to contend against the greatest ability, and as they have not been worsted in the contest, it seems to be but an ill compliment to their enemies to reproach them with incapability. Such vague and general incivilities (for they are not charges) shew only ill-temper and disappointment; and as proof has repeatedly been called for in vain, and there is so much proof upon the other hand, to persevere in it argues little sensibility to the shame of being refuted.

The great business of the country is its DEFENCE; and I am very much mistaken if that can be promoted by indifference to measures, and partiality to men. I think a great deal too much has been said about individuals, too much about Mr. Addington and Mr. Pitt. I protest I cannot adopt this novel heresy, and I hope it will never form an article in our political creed. In this fearful crisis of our country, I hope, that we have no other cause, no interest but hers! that we contend not for patrons, but for duties; not for parties, but for the state; and that we all rally round OUR SOVEREIGN and *his* ministers, *his* lieutenants, and *his* generals, round *all* who have *his* confidence and commission. I am sure this is the faith of the constitution, and that by this alone we can be saved!!!

A very

A very few words will now bring these hasty remarks to a conclusion. The Pitt and Grenville party, with all their experience and ability, and the great services which they have sometimes rendered the country, by some fatality or other have never understood its character nor enjoyed its affection.

History does not shew so gross an instance of credulous self-love and infatuated vanity, as the opinion they daily manifest, that their absence from the King's councils is regretted by the public; that the people desire their return to power; that the King has made an unpopular use of his prerogative in the present selection of his counsellors !

I am far from denying the talents or the virtues of their House; I do not even vindicate the country from some degree of ingratitude; but, as truth, I am compelled to acknowledge that they never were beloved nor endeared to it. Like the Claudian Family in Rome, (than which none was more fruitful of great and celebrated men) they do not coalesce and assimilate with the genius and temper of their country. To the catalogue of all their merits, and the praises to which they have an undoubted claim, we must add

Nisi in Liberâ Civitate nati essent.

The present ministers, I think, have this advantage, this happiness, over them, that they
fall

fall in with the character of the nation. I distinguish nothing personal in their sway; the men are not visible in the acts of their authority; they seem to be the servants, not the masters of the public; the nation governs *itself* more under them, and for them. Convinced, persuaded, and prepared, the people demand those laws and measures which used to be imposed upon them; they require those levies and taxes which were so lately felt as burthens and hardships. They identify themselves with a government which confides in them. The late ministry were often urged by their most strenuous supporters to place more reliance upon the people, but they never, as I have observed, understood their character, their temper, or their spirit. One of the first acts of their successors was, to restore the Habeas Corpus Act, and to repeal the Bills against Sedition. The trials of Despard and his accomplices were conducted in the ordinary course, like simple felonies, without alarm, without secret committees, without demonstrations of jealousy and mistrust. They now reap the fruit of their temper or their policy, for I have little scruple to assert, that without an appearance of force or power, without the reluctance of a single subject, by the confidence and affection of the people alone, they have been able to carry the greatest measures, of which there is either
record

record or tradition in the history of the empire.

Upon the 18th of May, Lord Whitworth's return from Paris was announced to parliament. —Little more than two months have elapsed, and the Militia, the Supplementary Militia, the Army of Reserve, amounting together to one hundred and sixty thousand men, have been added to the regiments of the line, and a Bill has received the Royal assent for arming the whole population of the island. It is true, Mr. Pitt and the Grenvilles think a great deal more might have been done and a great deal quicker —*quicker* than two months; *more* than all. — But this is the characteristic failing and misfortune of their family. For they would have had it *their* measure, and not the *nation's*; it would have been called *their* act, and now it is the people's! For effect and greatness, all must have been voted at once, the operation of each impeded by the others, and the whole imposed as law and authority, blamed, eluded, or resisted. I cannot think that an act of legislation can create a public spirit; but such an act as the general levy of the population of an empire, if it *precede* a public spirit, were a dangerous insurrection, the immediate precursor and instrument of its fall. As to the reproach of tardiness, therefore, it can have no other source than ignorance, or detraction; igno-

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rance profound and pitiable, if its authors think the Ministers *could* have brought in the bill till the people called for it; rancorous and base detraction, if they have the smallest knowledge of the history of men, or the most common rudiments of the science of government.

I have now completed a most ungracious and unpleasant task, to which I have submitted only from a sense of public duty, and a desire to render some service to the country. Parties are the natural disease of a free and popular constitution; and in mixed governments, they are perhaps necessary to represent and defend the respective powers and principles of the system.

This at least is their true use and action; and thus applied, their collisions have often produced those salutary crises, which have renovated and invigorated States, forcing them back, as it were, to the fountains of their prosperity, and to the principles and auspices from which they departed. It were a vain parade of learning to enumerate those parties, which representing and struggling for a particular principle of government, the rights of a family, or the dogmas of religion, have filled the pages of history with great and interesting transactions—the annals of our country abound with instances which we cannot always call to mind without sorrow and confusion; but never till the present moment, did a party arise without the
pretence

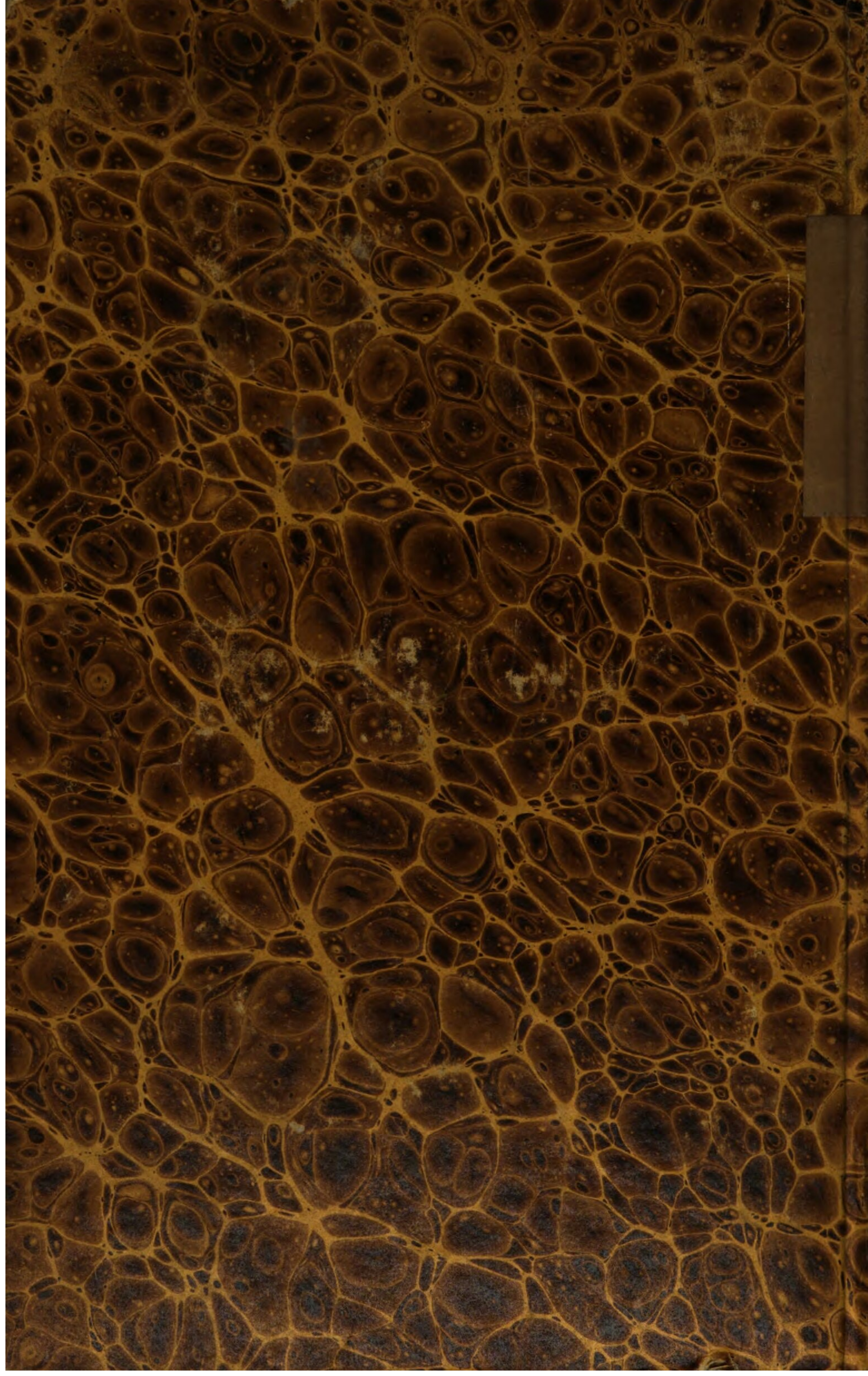
pretence at least, of some public principle and some national object, to dignify or disguise it. "The church was in danger;" "the succession was in danger;" "the constitution was invaded;" "a war was wanton and unnecessary;" but some pretence, some decent shred of hypocrisy has ever hitherto been spread over the nakedness of ambition.—It remained for our own times to present the spectacle of a family-compact, and a combination of wealth and influence, openly claiming the first offices of the State as their right, insisting upon nominating each other in their turn for the King's Cabinet, and professing their disregard of measures and their attachments and antipathy to men.

Certainly I have nothing exaggerated, I have set down nothing in malice. But I do deeply feel and tremble at the profligacy I am describing. When I consider the state of the empire, and the imminent perils which threaten our existence, I think a scramble for place is little different from the pillage of a wreck; and to embarrass or desert the common safety and defence for private objects of avarice and ambition, appears the foulest act of Treason and Parricide which can be committed.

I confess I think his Majesty's Ministers have a *right* to all our support, co-operation, and assistance. I should not *dare*, for light and trivial motives, at this terrible hour, to encrease their
difficulties

difficulties, diminish their credit, or shake the confidence of the people; I do not know that one ought to bring forward serious causes of complaint (if they existed) at a time when unanimity alone can preserve the empire. I consider them abstractedly as the KING's servants: faithful, able, vigorous, and fortunate, they have hitherto proved, and, I trust, will continue. But at all events, under them we must fight for all that is dear and sacred to humanity. By their side we shall conquer or lie down. I think there is no other party for us to take, and I am sure there is no duty more imperious and binding.

LONDON,
Sept. 5th, 1803.



Sidmouth, Henry Addington / Sidmouth, Henry Addington, / Bentley, Richard

A few cursory Remarks upon the state of parties during the administration
of the right honourable Henry Addington

London 1803 of the right honourable Henry Addington

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